

CHAPTER XIV

ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE

"State nel campo col gonfalone della santissima croce ; pensate che il sanpue di quest! glonosl martlrl sempre grida nel cospetto di Dio, chiedendo aopra vol l'adiutorlo suo. Pensate che questa terra e il giardino di Cnsto benedetto, ed e 'l principle della *aoatra*. fede. E perb ciaucuno per se medeaimo ci debbe essere inanimato."—St. Catherine, tetter 347 ("9)

NOTWITHSTANDING their having taken part in the conclave of Fondi, the three Italian cardinals at Tagliacozzo had not yet definitely committed themselves to either claimant to the papacy. Urban and Clement alike recognized them as members of the Sacred College and sought their alliance, and they themselves, while appealing to a General Council of the Church to decide the question, continued to write to both as lawful Sovereign Pontiff. In the latter part of January, 1379, they appear finally to have broken off negotiations with Urban, while still abstaining from formally and openly making common cause with Clement. To them, from Rome, Catherine now sent one of the most fiery and eloquent of her letters : " with desire of seeing you return to true and most perfect light, and issue from the great darkness and blindness into which you have fallen." As is her wont, she begins by enunciating a universal doctrine of love and light, the light of truth and the love of God, which are obscured by love of self and of transitory things. Life, at its best, is but a flower that the Supreme Judge will pluck, when it pleases Him, with the hand of death. Fearful at that hour will be the reckoning exacted by God from those He has set in the highest pkces and who have failed in their duty. Through self-love, "the poison of self-love that has poisoned the world," they

¹ They were still writing to Urban as Pope on January 17 ; but, in private conversation, they spoke of him as "ille Romanus," and his rival as "Dominus Clemens." Cf. Gayet, II. pp. 279-281, and doc. 30; Raynaldus, Yii. p, 370.